

REMARKS

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the prior art rejections of claims 5-27 under the judicially created double patenting doctrine in view of commonly assigned U.S. Patent No. 7,173,724 to Nomura et al ("Nomura") have been withdrawn in view of Applicants' arguments presented in the Amendment filed on May 21, 2007.

The foregoing amendments in claims 5 and 26 add the subject matter of claims 6 and 27, respectively, to make claims 5 and 26, and the claims dependent from claim 5, more clearly distinguishable over the cited prior art. Claims 5 and 26 make it clear that the change in display state is to a non-display state.

Applicants respectfully traverse the new rejection of claims 5-27 under 35 USC 103(a) in view of Nomura when combined with U.S. Patent No. 5,699,494 to Colbert et al. ("Colbert").

As previously discussed, Nomura '724 teaches switching from printer panel control of a printer to a situation where either a printer or scanner panel can control when the printer and scanner are linked to form one unit. However, Nomura '724 does not teach that a command entered at one panel causes a change to the display state on the other panel. The Examiner now also cites Colbert.

Colbert teaches a way for a system administrator at a host computer 11 to monitor and/or control the state and operation of one or more printers 16 connected to the host computer. The host computer is not itself an operational component, e.g., a scanner unit a claimed. The Colbert reference therefore is fundamentally different from the claimed invention in its structure and purpose.

Second, the Colbert patent teaches the creation of a replica 35' of the display 35 as a printer 16 on a monitor 13 for the host computer. This allows remote control over the printer, but entry of a command at the host computer (using replica 35') is not directed to placing the display 35 of the printer in a display state so as to avoid confusion of the operator. In particular, Colbert is directly opposite to the express

limitation of claim 5, as amended to include the subject matter of claim 6, that the changed display state is no display. See the discussion of "display state" on page 8 of the present specification, lines 5-12, and elsewhere. Colbert provides two identical displays at two separate locations (Col. 4, lines 25-36). Operations at either location produce the same effect (Col. 4, lines 33-36 and Col. 4, lines 54-56). In other words, Colbert duplicates a display and control panel for a remote administrator; it does not avoid confusion caused by two displays for two distinct sections of the same apparatus at the same location through a change of state of one display by placing it in a non-display state when a command is entered at the other display.

To further exemplify this point, at Column 14, lines 12 to 20, Colbert describes that a cursor is moved on the display 13 to the location of any of the pushbutton fields (40a', 40b', 40c', 40d', and the like) on the operator panel replica 35', so that selection one of these to produce pushbutton fields has the same effect as actuating a corresponding one of the pushbuttons 40a, 40b, 40c, 40d. The like pushbutton field on the operator panel 35 of the printer 16 is selected. Selection of a pushbutton field (40a', 40b', 40c', 40d', or the like) on the operator panel replica 35' causes some change in a display state of the operator panel 35 of the printer 16. But, as noted above, the host 11 not the scanner unit recited in claim 5 of the present application. Moreover, the cited references do not teach or suggest the feature of claim 6, now in claim 5, that "the other user interface section is in non-display state." As evident from the description in Column 14, lines 12 to 20 of Colbert, the operator panel replica 35' on the host 11 and the operator panel 35 of the printer 16 always display the same content, which is directly opposite to claim 5 as now amended.

While the Examiner has cited Column 10, lines 29 to 33 of Colbert as teaching the subject matter of claim 6, the part pointed out by the Examiner merely describes a part of Table 1, and appears to be irrelevant to a change of one display to a non-display state.

Regarding claim 10, the Examiner alleges that while Nomura does not teach or suggest the feature "in a combined use of said printer unit and said scanner unit, said display section of said printer unit is set to be effective if a predetermined condition is satisfied, and if not, only said display section of said scanner unit is set to be effective in displaying information regarding the combined use of said printer unit and said scanner unit 11; Colbert does at Column 6, lines 44 to 67.

However, Colbert describes at Col. 6 that the host 11 and the printer 16 are used in combination, but Colbert teaches that the operator panel replica 35' on the host 11 and the operator panel 35 of the printer 16 always display the same content. Therefore, Colbert neither teaches nor suggests that when the predetermined condition is satisfied, the operator panel 35 of the printer 16 is set to be effective, and that when the predetermined condition is not satisfied, only the operator panel replica 35' on the host 11 is set to be effective in displaying information regarding the combined use of the printer 16 and the host 11.

Colbert does not compensate the deficiency of Nomura, and there is no rationale to combine these two references. Applicants therefore urge that claim 10 of the present application is not obvious over the combination of Colbert and Nomura. For the same reasons, claims 11 to 18 also define patentable subject matter.

Regarding claim 19, the Examiner cites Fig. 2 and various passages from Nomura as teaching or suggesting "said display section of said scanner unit is provided on a front surface side of said scanner unit; said display section of said printer unit is provided on an upper surface on a back surface side of said printer; and in a combination use of said printer unit and said scanner unit, said scanner unit is provided with said printer unit, and said display section of said printer unit is invisible by a user."

According to such an arrangement, when the printer unit and the scanner unit are used in combination, the scanner unit is positioned above the printer unit as shown in Fig. 31 of the present invention, and the user cannot view the display section 200b of

the printer unit, so that an input operation is invalidated (disabled). As such, the display section 200b of the printer unit is structured to be visible under certain circumstances, but invisible for the user in the situation specified in claim 19. (See pages 57 to 60 of the specification of the present application.)

It is therefore important that the display section of the printer unit is invisible to the user.

Figs. 2 and 4 of Nomura show the overall structure of this device, but the operation panels of the scanner and printer are not shown. Fig. 15 of Nomura illustrates that the display section of the scanner 500 and the display section of the printer 400 are both easily visible from the user. They are marked on the attached copy of Fig. 15. This teaches away from claim 19.

The Examiner alleges that Nomura does not disclose the feature recited in claims 20 of the present application of "said plurality of user interface sections are arranged such that in response to an operation input entered by a specific user interface section, other user interface section(s) than said specific user interface section change(s) its (their) input acceptance state(s)." The Examiner cites Colbert, Column 6, lines 44 to 67, for this feature.

However, Column 6, lines 44 to 67 of Colbert merely describe: "host 11 is provided with a software utility program which, in cooperation with the controller of the printer 16, facilitates bi-directional communication between the host 11 and the printer 16 in order to provide a user of the host 11 with access to a replica 35' of the operator panel 35. The replica 35' is presented on the display 13 of the host 11 in the form of a graphical user interface." This passage does not recite anything about the input acceptance state.

Colbert does not meet the deficiency of Nomura, there is no rationale to combine these two references cited, and claim 20 is not obvious over the combination of Colbert and Nomura.

Claims 22-25 are patentable for the same reasons as claims 20.

Claim 26 has been amended in a manner parallel to the amendment of claim 5, and is believed to be patentable for the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing amendments and Remarks, Applicants urge that the pending claims are clearly patentable over the art of record, and that this application is otherwise in condition for allowance.

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